Prey in Disguise

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Prey in Disguise

by Ebyru

Summary

An anon on tumblr said this: "I was hoping you could do one where Will's house suffers a small fire and so Hannibal has to take him in, but what Hannibal wasn't counting on was Will bringing all six dogs with him? Pretty please?"

Notes

un-beta'd because I'm lazy. sorry, there's no excuse. I will take more prompts if anyone has any (besides genderswap). :)

also, please tell me if the characterizations/speaking is done well enough; it's important to me.

See the end of the work for more notes

Will had gone a bit too far this time; too deep within the psyche of a homicidal pedophile. Luckily, there aren't many children in his neighbourhood to gape at, to salivate over, like the murderer had.

His name was John, and he worked in a children's hospital as a janitor. When children with long-term or terminal illnesses checked in, John observed them with an insatiable hunger. Their parents came to visit, of course, and they stayed for considerable amounts of time – but they couldn't stay forever.

Who would suspect a janitor who'd been employed at the hospital for two decades, married and with two children of his own?

John had a nasty habit of smoking moments before he abducted his victims. Once, and *only* once, he left a cigarette butt behind. Jack Crawford's team found it, and Will pieced it all together within minutes.

But now…Will's dogs whimper at his feet while he stares with glazed eyes out of his bedroom window. The tobacco stick between his fingers is lit, but he doesn't carry this habit; he doesn't crave nicotine like John had. It burns right up to the tip as the dogs whimper like white noise. It stings Will's index finger, and he drops the butt carelessly, accidentally, distracted by Winston scraping at the back of his thighs.

When he bends down to pet him, the rest huddle in; they surround him in a protective barrier. They always know when he isn't himself because they've seen it so many times now. The signs are recognizable even to them.

The crackle of something behind Will startles him. Each dog begins barking, frantic. He opens the door to let them outside, but stays inside, dragging off his bedcovers. He swings against the fire, trying to stomp it out with the weight of his sweat-soaked sheets, his bare feet, his yellow-stained pillows; nothing works. He joins his dogs outside on the grass.

Surprisingly, a neighbour heard the ruckus and called 911 immediately.

Will watches as half of his home, his safe haven, is overrun by firefighters and thick charcoal smoke. They manage to save half of it in time; the rest will need rebuilding and cleaning. He is now homeless for the next two weeks – minimum.

He's unsure of where he even found the cigarette he was holding, unsure whether he's awake or dreaming as his dogs sit with their tails wagging around him, unsure whether he should keep them anymore if he can't even take care of himself. He's their fearless leader, and he has no idea what to do next.

Sitting in the grass of his front lawn, he calls around different motels in search of a vacant room that allows pets. *Many* pets. Five motels are fully booked, and the rest would only allow one pet. Will sighs into his hands, trying one more number his good Samaritan neighbour handed him.

A hand gently taps his shoulder when a receptionist picks up and says "*Sunshine Motel, how can I help you?"*

Will turns around to find Hannibal above him, wearing a half-smile. "That won't be necessary now," he says. "Come, Will. You look exhausted and I have no shortage of rooms."

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Hannibal had thought this would be the perfect chance to get closer to the empath; to engage in darker conversations, and slowly convince Will of his true nature. Instead, and this should have been anticipated, six dogs take run of Hannibal's immaculate, pet-free home.

Because of Will's attachment to his 'paddle', the dogs also want to socialize with Hannibal. Hannibal who'd rather drop them in the middle of a frozen lake, and walk away as they yelp against their inevitable icy death.

As soon as Hannibal helps Will bring what's left of his clothes into a guest room, the dogs barge in and settle in a heap on the floor. Hannibal's brow twitches imperceptibly as he watches layers of dog hair cover his antique furniture.

But Will, poor tormented Will, sits on the edge of the bed, head in his hands. A feast in the making for Hannibal.

Hannibal takes a seat next to him, careful for their bodies not to touch. He's in such a fragile state already; it's a miracle he's accepted this much from Hannibal.

"He's drowning me," Will murmurs, tugging at the ends of his hair. "I can't cut him out of my head. He won't let go of my thoughts."

Hannibal's tongue moistens at the thought of cutting flesh – cutting that John's flesh – to save Will from unnecessary trauma. And yet, if it weren't for him, Will wouldn't be in his home, on the verge of breaking open wide enough for Hannibal to crawl inside. John's existence is safe for now.

This isn't a session; Will is not asking for advice. He just needs someone to understand and to listen. In this case, he requires comfort, and Hannibal knows physical touch will provoke the best results. Tentatively, Hannibal places a hand on Will's shoulder.

Will peers at Hannibal from the corner of his eye, tensing momentarily, but he does not move away or speak again. Hannibal tells him, "If you don't feel the need for sleep, downstairs there is coffee and silence. Or an active ear."

"I'd rather stay here," Will says, looking fully at Hannibal for an instance. "If you don't mind."

“Of course,” he replies, patting Will and standing to leave. Will looks shaken at the doctor’s quick retreat; it won’t be long until he’s begging Hannibal to help him free from his nightmarish shackles.

Hannibal closes the door behind him, and allows himself a smile as he makes his way to his bedroom. If Will needs him, he’ll find him.

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Will’s skin feels sickly cold, and the bed is drenched in inhuman amounts of sweat. The dogs are all piled by his feet, but he still feels an ache for company. His fingertips are stained yellow from cigarettes he didn’t know he brought, and when he looks around he can’t find the source. At least there’s no fire this time; he could never forgive himself if he destroyed Hannibal’s home, too.

Moving around his dogs, Will slips out of bed in his boxer shorts and t-shirt. He hasn’t brought anything else to sleep in, and he needs to change out of his damp clothes. Hopefully, Hannibal won’t mind the brief interruption of his sleep.

Leaving his dogs behind, Will exits his room and makes his way down the long, empty hall. Each wall is decorated with an elegant painting of nature, the human form or both. There are a number of doors on each side, all with too much gold-trimming and care to be a master bedroom. They are for show, to impress, but not for comfort; Hannibal’s bedroom must be further.

On the lower floor, there is a library that Will hadn’t noticed when he’d arrived, and he figures Hannibal’s bedroom must be nearby. Just as his office is littered with books, he must often want to read before sleep takes him, Will decides.

A photo of a young boy and girl is placed beside an ebony doorway, and Will *knows* he’s chosen correctly. He knocks, and there’s no answer for a few seconds. Will fidgets, his hand poised to knock again, until Hannibal appears at the door like a spirit.

He’s still dressed in a crisp, white dress shirt and dark, grey slacks, but his hair seems slightly less coiffed. His hands are undoing his cufflinks as he watches Will, calm and unperturbed. He says, “Is something the matter? Do you need an ear after all?”

Will’s hands are shaking and ice cold when he wrings them together in front of him. He doesn’t know what to say, how to make this stop, and why he’s even here. He’d never ask anyone to stay at their home, let alone bring his dogs with him. Alana…Alana would have perhaps let him; maybe he’d be better off there.

“Sorry, I’m just—I’ll be gone tomorrow—” Will says, turning to leave. What was he thinking disturbing Hannibal like this? They have a professional relationship to respect.

"*Will*."

Will shivers at the authority in his tone, stopping in his tracks. He glances back, eyes scanning from his open shirt, the belt dangling from his hips, and the hard jut of Hannibal's jaw. The bones in Will's knees suddenly feel unstable, turning to dust at the sight before him. He collapses forward, and Hannibal catches him easily.

"Why don't you stay here so I can keep an eye on you?" he says, carrying Will and tucking him in his bed like a child.

Grinding his teeth, Will keeps his gaze on the hardwood floor as he shuffles his feet. "I didn't come here for this. I just wanted to – to -"

"To separate yourself from John," Hannibal states plainly. "I am aware, dear Will, of the things that plague you. I believe I can be of help."

Mouth dry, Will watches as Hannibal drops his shirt on the back of an embroidered chair. He pulls his white undershirt over his head, unselfconscious, and then places his hands on his hips. He waits a long moment before he speaks.

"Tell me, does this repulse you?" Hannibal asks, gaze steady and penetrating. Will swallows the words that crack in his throat like chalk on a crime scene. His heart pounds when he shakes his head; Hannibal slowly unzips his pants. "And now?" he asks, letting the fabric pool at his feet.

Hannibal's not wearing underwear, Will notices; he pulls the blanket up to his chin when he shakes his head this time.

Folding the pants and placing them on the seat of the chair, Hannibal continues, "Do you feel attraction perhaps?"

Will covers up the way his Adam's apple jumps by tugging the blanket a bit higher; it definitely isn't disgust he feels.

"I need to know," Hannibal says, dragging the blanket down by a corner at Will's restless feet. "I am not a child, Will. John would not find my body appealing."

Fighting to keep the blanket from slipping, Will nods sharply, eyes screwed shut. The bed dips slowly while the blanket slides down to his waist. He opens his eyes just as Hannibal is climbing between his thighs, stark naked and unashamed.

"I can help you if you allow it," Hannibal whispers, leaning in with one sensuous movement. His breath is a burning warmth in contrast to the chill coating the skin of Will's forearms.

Seconds tick by as Will tries to meet Hannibal's gaze. His lips are pursed, his hair falling across his broad forehead, and finally, his eyes … They are unflinching, captivating, dark pools of tar that Will has stepped into. His lashes flutter when Hannibal leans closer.

"Tell me," he says, "Don't you think it's time our relationship moved beyond what it currently is?"

Will lets his eyes close and leans forward, pressing his lips to Hannibal's. The taste of copper fills his mouth when Hannibal lets him bite down on his lip, split it, ravenously taking what he's needed all along. When Hannibal slips beneath the blankets, lying fully on top of Will, they are both hard. Will aches to be closer somehow; already he's suffering the burn of what this desire represents.

And, worst of all, Will *welcomes* it.

End Notes

comments appreciated. :)

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